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ABSTRACT

There are many issues concerning women of all ages and substance abuse. Women who abuse alcohol or other drugs are particularly at risk for sexual assault; unprotected sex; unwanted pregnancies; and sexually transmitted diseases. Females between the ages of 12 and 17 surpass males in their use of cigarettes; cocaine; crack; inhalants; and prescription drugs, according to the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. The use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs during pregnancy continues to be a leading preventable cause of mental, physical, and psychological impairments and problems in infants and children. This paper provides tips and resources geared specifically towards women to help communities undertake the needed measures to reduce substance use and abuse. A list is included of national organizations, publications, and names of community leaders who work in the field of substance abuse. (JDM)

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WOMEN AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Technical Assistance Packet

Join Together:
A National Resource for Communities Fighting Substance Abuse and Gun Violence

www.jointogether.org/

April 2000

ED 456 353

Description of the Issue

There are a number of issues related to women and substance abuse. Issues related to the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs for young women, violence and abuse, issues of health for women as well as pregnant and post-partum women and the effects of substances on the fetus are some examples. Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse can have devastating consequences on women's health. Lung cancer rates among females, for example, have increased sixfold in the past 40 years. Lung cancer now has passed breast cancer as the leading fatal cancer for women. Women who abuse alcohol and/or drugs are at particular risk for: sexual assault, unprotected sex, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS according to the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. The incidence of AIDS is increasing more rapidly among women than men, with heterosexual contact rather than intravenous drug use fast becoming the primary method of transmission to women.

According to the Center for Substance Abuse, among 12- to 17-year-olds, females surpass males in the use of cigarettes, cocaine, crack, inhalants, and prescription drugs (such as stimulants, sedatives, and tranquilizers) for nonmedical reasons. Alcohol use by preteen girls can delay the onset of puberty, interfering with adolescent maturation.

Lastly, the use of alcohol, tobacco, and/or other drugs (ATOD) during pregnancy continues to be a leading preventable cause of mental, physical, and psychological impairments and problems in infants and children. According to a recent National Institute on Drug Abuse study on estimated use of selected substances during pregnancy, 5.5 percent of the women surveyed reported using illicit drugs while they were pregnant. Additionally, 18.8 percent reported using alcohol, and 20.4 percent reported using tobacco.

What follows is a list of national organizations, publications, community leaders with an expertise in women and substance abuse, and community stories.

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National Organizations

The Office for Women's Services
The Office of Women's Services addresses the special problems and prevention and treatment needs of women with substance abuse and mental disorders.
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 12-105 Parklawn Building, Rockville, MD 20857; Tel: 301-443-5184; www.samhsa.gov/

National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)
NCADI has a section on its website devoted to statistics, research, publications and resources on women including *Girl Power*. *Girl Power* is the national public education campaign to help encourage and motivate 9- to 14- year-old girls to make the most of their lives by reinforcing and sustaining positive values among girls by targeting health messages to the unique needs, interests, and challenges of girls.
P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20847-2345; Tel: 800-729-6686; Fax: 301-468-6433; www.health.org/

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)
CSAT funds and collaborates with private and public treatment providers to develop and support policies, approaches and programs for individuals who abuse alcohol and other drugs. Information is disseminated through CSAT by Fax which may be accessed by email, CESAR@cesar.umd.edu or by website, www.bsos.umd.edu/cesar/html. Publications on a variety aspects of treatment are available from the National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at 800-729-6686 or www.health.org/.
CSAT, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville II Building, Rockville, MD 20857; Tel: 301-443-2467; www.samhsa.gov/csat/csat.htm

The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) is a non-profit organization committed to raising public awareness about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect. NOFAS provides resources about prevention, intervention and treatment as well as offers training for professionals.
418 'C' Street North East, Washington, DC 20002; Tel: 202-785-4585; Fax: 202-466-6456; Eml: nofas@erols.com; www.nofas.org/

The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA)
NACoA is a national nonprofit membership organization working on behalf of children of alcoholics. Their mission is to advocate for all children and families affected by alcoholism and other drug dependencies. You can get publications and articles related to COA's on their website.
11426 Rockville Pike, Suite 100, Rockville, MD 20852; Tel: 301-468-0985; Fax: 301-468-0987; www.health.org/nacoa/

The National Association for Perinatal Addiction Research and Education
The Helpline services pregnant, substance abusing women in need of in-patient or outpatient treatment. The helpline also provides information about the effects of substance abuse on the fetus to pregnant women, students and businesses.
11 E. Hubbard St., Suite 200, Chicago, IL 60611; Tel: 312-629-4321; Helpline #: 800-638-BABY

Publications and How to Order Them

The publications listed here are both free and of modest cost.

- *Keeping Score – Women and Drugs: Looking at the Federal Drug Control Budget*
  This resource assesses Federal drug control spending with an emphasis on women. A look at alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among women from the public health, criminal justice, children, treatment, and prevention perspectives are the focus. Copies are available from Drug Strategies, 2445 M Street, NW, Suite 480, Washington, DC 20037; Tel: 202-663-6090; Fax: 202-663-6110; www.drugstrategies.org.

- *Substance Abuse and the American Woman*
  A comprehensive report addressing the impact of substance abuse upon the American woman. In the deadly game of substance abuse and addiction, the study reveals that women have become like men and are paying a higher price for it: women get drunk faster, become addicted quicker and develop substance abuse-related diseases sooner than men. Available from The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, (CASA) online at www.casacolumbia.org/ or by calling 212-841-5260.

- *"Pregnant, Substance-Abusing Women"*
  Treatment Improvement Protocol Series, #2.
  This is a Center for Substance Abuse Treatment guide that provides information on effects of different drugs during pregnancy and legal guidelines on the care of substance-abusing women. Copies are available from the National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information at 800-729-6686 or www.health.org/.

- *Women of Substance*
  This is a videotape designed to highlight the issues of women and substance abuse, including the need for treatment as opposed to incarceration.
  Legal Action Center, Video/Action Fund, 3034 Q St., NW, Washington, DC 20007; Tel: 202-338-1094; www.lac.org/

- *Straight from the Heart: Stories of Mothers Recovering from Addiction*
  VIDA Health Communications, 6 Bigelow Street, Cambridge, MA 02139; Tel: 617-864-4334

Community Leaders

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Community Stories

Stories listed below are reprinted from Join Together Online. Similar stories can be found at www.jointogether.org.

Reaching Out to Disadvantaged Rural Women Experiencing Substance Abuse Problems
This project is designed to help rural women experiencing substance abuse problems, poverty and economic disadvantages. Monthly workshops are given to encourage women to start home and small businesses. Life issue problems such as substance abuse, physical abuse, codependency, grief and parenting difficulties are discovered and help is provided. Women are seen by counselors weekly and the counselors report that the majority of caseloads are substance abuse related. Through anecdotal evidence, the program reports that attendance by women at the local Alcoholics Anonymous meeting is up by about 30 percent. For more information, contact Janis L. McLaughlin at Heartland Circle, 133 Bennett Street, Wellington, OH 44090; Tel: 440-647-6086; Eml: HEARTLANDCIRCLE@prodigy.net.

Residential Treatment Program Prevents Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
Southcentral Foundation Dena A. Coy Transitional Support Program is a residential treatment program designed for the prevention of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects. Women with substance abuse and other co-existing issues are provided with individualized residential treatment addressing addiction, mental health, parenting education, life skills, spirituality/culture and wellness as well as comprehensive aftercare services. The goal is to have

participants progress to sober, independent living and return to the community as productive and responsible adults and parents. To meet this objective, the Transitional Support Program service consists of four primary components including Mental Health Therapy; Life Skills Case Management; Chemical Dependency Case Management; and PyschoEducational Groups and Family Activities. For more information, contact Lorraine Namyniuk at 3916 E. 9th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99508; Tel: 907-333-6677; Fax: 907-333-1716.